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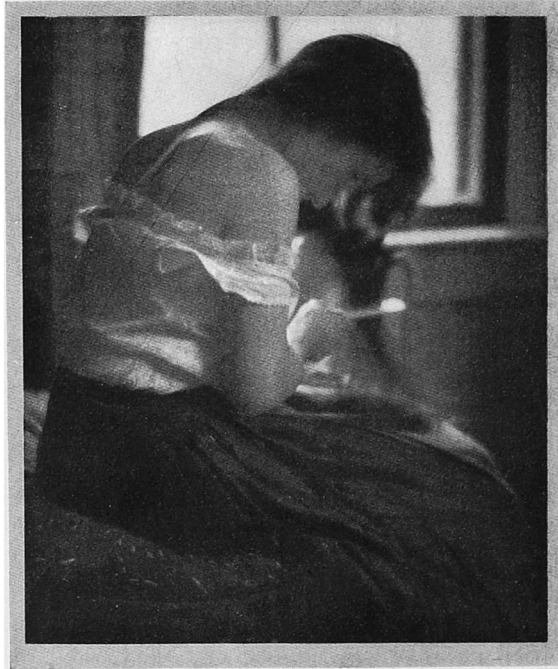
DUTCH ART IN LONDON

The Guildhall exhibitions in London have a distinctive character of their own, and while the displays given usually lack the charm of novelty, they frequently have an interest that far transcends that of the shows of contemporary work commonly given in the other important galleries.

Being loan exhibitions, they have little concern for the year's doings in art, but they are always arranged for a special end, and it should be said that they rarely fail of their purpose. In a word, they are not less an educational opportunity than an artistic treat.

Primarily, the show of this year is one of work by earlier and modern painters of the Dutch school. It is a large subject for comparatively small space, especially as the

largest room in the Guildhall Gallery is given over to an entirely separate collection. The earlier masters have suffered the most. As far as they are concerned, more could easily have been made of the limited opportunity. For when so little could be shown, it seems that this little should have consisted of one or more masterpieces by each

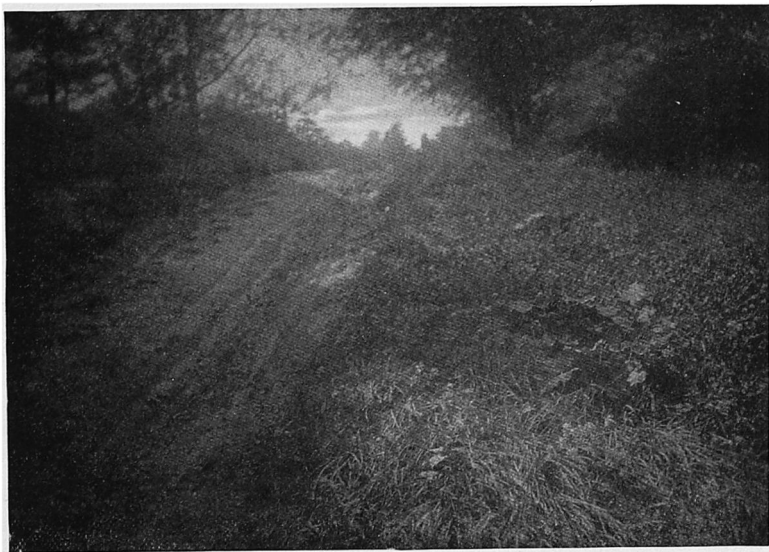


THE MORNING TOILET
By S. L. Willard

of the great masters, instead of a few fine paintings and many inferior works of interest to nobody but to the various dealer in attributions.

There are pictures by Frans Hals and Rembrandt that one need not be a Morellian to refuse to those painters, who surely would turn in their graves could they know that such performances were being foisted upon them. But then there is also one fine portrait by each that the artist and the art-lover would travel many long miles to see.

"Admiral De Ruyter," by Hals, lent by Earl Spencer, is a strong



DEEPENING SHADOWS

By S. L. Willard

study of strong character. It is a three-quarter length, the figure posed with as much feeling for the commanding force of the man as for its place on the canvas, the face broadly modeled, and the costume of black, with full white sleeves and a white collar, put in with the technical freedom that makes Hals seem so very modern—yet what modern could be quite so supremely skilful? You feel the strength of a man born to lead and to conquer in this portrait by the Dutch master, even as you do in the Admiral by Velasquez.

Rembrandt's portrait of his son Titus, as a youth of thirteen, lent by a French collector who calls himself Monsieur X., has been seen in recent years at the Rembrandt shows in Amsterdam and London, and needs no description. But to see it again is to feel again the

beauty of the face and the splendor of the color. This canvas is assuredly a very remarkable performance by an unusually gifted artist.

Perhaps it is because these two pictures give the standard of Dutch art in the past that so much else of the old work strikes one as trivial and insignificant. But there are still a few other fine things, which would merit extended notice did space permit more detailed discussion.

When it comes to the modern painters—and there is no link



THE WILLOWS

By S. L. Willard

between them and the giants of the seventeenth century—the chief merit seems to be in the unusually large and representative series of paintings by Matthys Maris, an artist who now rarely exhibits—who, for that matter, now rarely produces. Many of his most beautiful pictures, done before he became a slave to his ideals, belong to English and Scotch collectors. Never, perhaps, have such a number been hung together. There is, therefore, an admirable chance to study his methods and his achievement. One cannot say that the collection alters the opinion one had already formed; there is still no question that he was most accomplished when he was least vague and elusive. It may be that he is now busy in pursuit of far higher ideals, but if

these elude him so persistently just as he endeavors to realize them on his canvas, it cannot be marveled that in his halting expression of them they should escape us altogether. Perhaps this is the reason he now finishes so little.

It must be confessed that much of the work of Jacob Maris seems in comparison only a brilliant technical exercise. He was more the artist, less the conjuror with the brush, when he was still under the influence of his brother Matthys, and painted such sober, quiet little pictures as the well-known "Peacock Feather," "Bird-cage," and "Shrine"; also marvels of minuteness and fine reticent color. But in later years he painted too much. He gained in breadth without ever tumbling into the pitfall of vagueness; but his brown towns, his blue milk-pails, even his big lowering skies came to have in them something of a trick, a convention.

However, when he did not dash them off according to recipe, when he studied his Holland with sympathy or made you feel that he did, he could be very stately and dignified, and the large "River and Windmills" and "Gathering Seaweed," the small "Souvenir of Dordrecht" and "A Small Bit of Delft," show him at his very best.

Israels, likewise, has been the victim of over-production, the tool of his sentimental public. His pathos, too, has gradually become a matter of recipe, and more often than not degenerates into sheer mawkishness and sham. As Mr. Henley puts it, "his appeal is all too obvious. He makes no secret of his design upon your tears."

Willem Maris, the least distinguished of the three brothers, is not seen to advantage. Mauve fares better, and many of the landscapes, and studies, and animals by him justify a reputation that has suffered at the hands of the dealers. Where the exhibition is lamentably weak is in the poor showing it makes of men like Breitner and Witsen, hanging only one example of the first, only two of the latter, though every one who has been to the museum of modern work in Amsterdam knows what a vigorous and very personal painter he is. Bauer fares no better, though he also deserves greater consideration. Van Toorop is ignored altogether. Nor is there anything to suggest that admirable black-and-white work is being done to-day in Holland.

LONDON.

R. C.

